

The Board of Selectmen met on Tuesday, January 8, 2019 beginning at 7:00pm in the Main Meeting Room of the Town Hall. The following members were present.

Mark Gallivan, Chairman
Nancy Mackenzie, Vice Chairman
James O'Neil, Clerk
David Salvatore
Ann Ragosta

Also present:
James Johnson, Town Administrator
Cindy Berube, Executive Assistant

Announcements

Today is former Town Clerk Ted Heeler's 90th birthday. Sgt. Steve Giampa is retiring after 32 years of service to the town. Thank you for your hard work.

APPOINTMENTS

1-1 Promotion of Detective Michael Benner to Police Sergeant

Chief Carmichael spoke of Sgt. Steve Giampa. He will be greatly missed in the dept.

Michael Benner coming in as a replacement, an exemplary detective. The Deputy Chief and I and command staff interviewed and the position of Sergeant is the most important person. We interviewed 10 officers for this position. We have a great caliber of officers, and made this job difficult. Some of the things Michael has shown us great work ethic and always carries out tasks. Someone that is a leader amongst his peers. We are proud to bring him to you tonight. One thing we look for Police officers that are street smart. He has done a great job as detective; communities oriented, engaged in the community and prevent things for reoccurring again. He is very well balanced; he will fit in for Sgt. Giamapa as well. Because of all those reason we ask you to consider him to be Sgt.

Michael Benner, it is an honor to be before you, grew up in Braintree, my wife and I moved here. We have three children; he was hired 7 yrs. ago and an honor to work here every day. Mr. Gallivan thinks he is a great choice. You had a lot of good competition.

Mr. O'Neil, congratulations, great to see promotions from within.

MOTION moved by Mrs. Mackenzie to promote Detective Michael Benner to Police Sergeant, seconded by Mr. Gallivan 4-0-1(Mrs. Mackenzie abstained)

OPEN FORUM- NO ONE PRESENT

NEW BUSINESS

1-2 reappointment of Lorraine Dundon to Recreation Committee

MOTION moved by Mrs. Mackenzie to reappoint Lorraine Dundon as an associate member of the Recreation Committee Seconded by Mr. Gallivan, VOTED 5-0-0

General discussion and Possible VOTE on the 2020 Town Budget

Mr. Johnson noted the budget is balanced; he is looking to get some guidance from the board. Went back to 2012 and looked at receipts, it has been very clear to me that we have been underestimating receipts. The budget, the overall increase is about 4.2%. The police will go up and add one SGT, the FBI recommended 2 officers per 1,000 residents. The chief did ask for an increase of about \$318,000 but could not. The public schools this is about a 3% increase, I am expecting it to come in about 4%. Tri county 17% increase their school committee has not voted on their budget. The Vehicle Maintenance will increase. There are 90-145 vehicles. Parks division 7.8% increase. Assessment and fringe benefits 6.2% increase, this is very preliminary. The union has signed the MOA. Transfers \$300,000 to put in stabilization. I have listened to this Board and the Fincom. To approve the proposed revenue projections.

If you want me to modify the levy limit or the proposed revenue I will. Mr. Gallivan we are not voting on the entire budget. You are looking to vote about revenue.

Ms. Ragosta in you 2020 projections estimated receipts significant increase, over 1 million from last year. My observation of under estimating revenue, you cannot look at it in a vacuum, it is conservative. The failure has been is to not take the surplus to reduce taxes. Take that 1 million dollars and put it towards the tax levy. Apply it 2.1/2 percent increase. If the Board looks at estimated receipts. I think we should offset the taxes. A million over last year is a lot of money.

Ms. Ragosta these debt exclusion amounts they will be going to pay the debt obligation, different. The library construction, I did not know that was a debt exclusion override.

Mrs. Mackenzie does not like taxes; I like to budget within our 2 1/2 we should not give money back until we meet our stabilization. We know there are public mental health issues. Is there more we should do to help them? Wellesley they made a big investment, until we have met need that this town needs, we should not be looking at giving money back.

Mr. O'Neil we just built the Council on Aging and we are going to have to staff the facility. I spent hours going over the numbers. Did I think the revenue projections were reasonable? Provided us with a 5-year average. As I looked at the number they looked reasonable to me. I think the Board wanted to be more aggressive. Your projections look good, looking to put money toward OPEB, Number of other things to be looked at in the budget. You are looking for your projections; we still have to go thru the process for Fincom. Do we look at these numbers and feel that they are reasonable, I think they are.

Mr. Salvatore the changes in the Revenue Projections, what was the net changes? Mr. Johnson there was two major ones, motor vehicle excise, and license and permits. What we did the previous years. In FY18 1.8million, we had budgeted and we did \$900,000. I went back and looked at 3 yr. and 5yr average. 1.4 million on permits, I bumped that up. The numbers on Excise has increased. Mr. Salvatore how does that compare to previous years. It is about a difference of \$500,000. Hotel tax, I am comfortable at this time. We only have one quarter on those hotels.

Back to police increase, the current is 43 officers and we are bumping up to 44. We would like to be at 50. Mr. Johnson went to our auditors and said, this year we are about 3million off. They want us to be a little more conservative. Mr. Salvatore I wonder in a recession year if it drops off dramatically for excise. I am surprised the state does not have a prediction. Mr. Gallivan the numbers do drop off. I am comfortable with the number Jim has. Mr. Salvatore it seems like there should be more guidance on this stuff. My concern now is you are asking us to say that this is how much money is coming in. The actual recommended budget had to cut out 2.2 million out of requests. Are you comfortable with these numbers? Mr. Johnson I base my budget on 66/44. I can't wait for the school dept. I go with our number after the Fincom gets the books some things some change. Mr. Salvatore how much does that give the School dept.

Mr. Gallivan is comfortable with the budget you have put together. I like the idea of being aggressive with the revenue. Money that doesn't get spent drops down and becomes free cash. I do not think of it as surplus. We anticipate money dropping down and can be used for capital budget; to me it is a process. I don't buy that it is surplus revenue. We could be more aggressive on the front end. I like the numbers you come up with, the trend, is 24,000 to 25,000 people based on Moosehill road, the AQV, the two 600 apartments coming on line. I do like spending what the state allows us to spend. We could put more money into the roads. We have schools over 40/50 years old.

Mr. Salvatore so you are saying that in those years were we under predicted, that money did not become available for the budget. Mr. Gallivan it becomes free cash. The money not spent in the operating budget and can be used for improvements. It is a guessing game. The state does not give us the number earlier. Mr. Salvatore so you are taking money out of the budget that could have been used in the budget,

Ms. Ragosta your projected revenue increase 4.2%. I think that this board and town government would be sending a positive message to the taxpayers. We don't need to increase our budget to 4.2. Reduce the tax levy amount by 1/2 percent. At the end of the budget process. Ms. Ragosta I know that we have received messages from taxpayers about their tax bills. I think it would be a very positive message.

Mr. O'Neil if we were to do what you are saying. If we take 1million out Jim would have to go back and balance the budget. I think it is a mistake to do that. I would not be in favor of reducing the levy. If you think ahead and the local receipts go down. I think we need to avoid that. We can put ourselves at risk. From a revenue projection do we agree with his projections?

Ms. Ragosta I hear what you are saying, if we are comfortable with the local receipts and he reduces his expenditures. At some point this town has increased its spending 4% year after year. Although our population has only increased 8% over the last 10 years. We should let the people know we will rein in spending.

Mrs. Mackenzie I am very confused when we have liability and we have OPEB that needs to be paid off, roads needing improvement, waterways that cause damage if not taken care of. We have a lot of trash that we have nothing to do with. We are going to have so many needs, I do not understand that we have an overage, are there other towns that do this? There are seniors that have gone. Ms. Ragosta there are 300 communities that do not tax to the levy. I will send you my spreadsheet with other towns that do not tax to the levy.

Mr. Salvatore the budget from schools is just for salaries, we provide maintenance, snow plowing, billing, heating, and health insurance.

Mr. Johnson this is what I wanted from the Board. Mr. Salvatore you funded stabilization fund, \$300,000. Mr. Johnson we usually wait until free cash comes along.

Mrs. Mackenzie would like us to be going as you projected and several things that need to be taking care of in this town. Mrs. Mackenzie we hold the School accountable. Mr. Salvatore we do not hold them accountable at all. Mrs. Mackenzie they don't have fluff. I do not think we are over budgeting the school.

MOTION moved by Mr. Gallivan to have Jim continue down the path he is going with 2 ½ and the estimates he is using, seconded by Mr. O'Neil 3-2-0 (Mr. Salvatore, Ms. Ragosta opposed)

CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION moved by Mrs. Salvatore to accept with much appreciation the following gifts

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| 1. Kraus Family to COA for Educational Service Account | \$25,000 |
| 2. Various Donors to Library Gift Account | \$885 |
| 3. Barbara Proctor, Ambulance Gift Account | \$50 |

Seconded, Mr. Gallivan VOTED 5-0-0

Mr. Gallivan talked about how busy the Council on Aging has been since it opened.

TOWN ADMINISTRATORS UPDATE

Foxboro pilot-if there is anything you think I am missing please let me know.

Health Insurance-will present the Memorandum of Agreement with union to you on the 22nd.

Ms. Ragosta my concern is that it places a financial burden on the employees; my feelings have been was to consider single stream recycling. When one hears cost saving, the saving that this town is going to obtain, maybe a hit to the employees, it is not saving the taxpayers. A little uncomfortable. She feels it is a double hit for those living in town. Mr. Salvatore is the same plan currently for employees could that have been available. Mr. Johnson, yes. This plan the amount we are introducing deductibles and higher copays.

Family will be \$250 deductible for the year. Ms. Ragosta if the employees are happy with the health insurance they have they should be able to keep it. My idea as Selectmen has been to find cost savings, not only benefits. If we are going to reduce spending which don't affect the town employees. Mrs. Mackenzie should we abandon this, we should take a look at this. Ms. Ragosta I would like to see more plans offered. It does not make me comfortable to put more of a financial burden on the employees; it is a savings in one aspect going to be spent somewhere else.

Mr. Salvatore we should have everything in the same pot, when we spend too much money on some things, it impacts. Do we dredge a pond or buy books. Real choices should be made on real issues. It should all be part of the budget at once.

Mrs. Ragosta to go back to my philosophy. My goal of using the savings and returning to the taxpayer, but not taxing to the maximum.

Mr. Gallivan we are talking about 2 percent savings on health insurance.

MINUTES

MOTION moved by Mr. Gallivan to approve the minutes of December 18, 2018, seconded by Mrs. Mackenzie, VOTED 5-0-0

MOTION moved by Mr. Gallivan to adjourn at 8:30pm, seconded by Mrs. Mackenzie, VOTED 5-0-0

